



# City of Alexandria

## Transportation Commission

### Regular Meeting

September 16, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Council Workroom

### MINUTES

**Commissioners Present:** Councilman Lovain, Chair Nathan Macek, Scott Anderson, Christine Michaelis, Jake Jakubek, Maria Wasowski, and Stephen Klejst

**Commissioners Excused:** Mayor William Euille, Jerry King, James Lewis, Annika Moman

**Staff Present:** Carrie Beach- P&Z, Karen Callahan- T&ES, Lee Farmer-T&ES, Ray Hayhurst-T&ES, Lisa Jaatinen-T&ES, Yon Lambert- T&ES, Raymond Mui-DASH, Patrick Reed-T&ES, Ramond Robinson -T&ES, Carrie Sanders-T&ES, Steve Sindiong -T&ES

Chair Nathan Macek called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

#### 1. July 22, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Macek called the meeting to order. He asked if there were any edits to the July 22, 2015 minutes. There being no edits, Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Jake Jakubek and unanimously approved by the Commission.

#### 2. Updates To Receive (Consent Items)

The Commission received updates on the funding of various ongoing projects: 1) the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station; 2) the Eisenhower West Transportation Study; 3) the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update; 4) the Route 7 at I-395 VDOT Project; 5) the Complete Streets Update; 6) the Ferry Study; and 7) King Street Metrorail Station. Commissioner Macek asked to be updated on the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station. Staff member Lee Farmer stated that initially the function of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation (PYMIG) Work Group was to ensure a thorough technical analysis of the new Metrorail station and ensure full coordination with other City efforts. That process is being finalized and a conceptual design of the station is ongoing. City Council approved a change in the composition and responsibilities of the Work Group. This change will enable PYMIG to function as a forum for public engagement through station opening. The change will also allow the group to consider issues that will arise as the project moves into design and construction. The Work Group will be expanded from six to nine members. One of the City Council seats will be removed in order for the Work Group structure to include one representative from the City's Parks and Recreation

Commission. The Work Group will also add one community representative from the neighborhoods east of the CSX tracks within the Potomac Yard Small Area Plan area, one community representative from west of the CSX tracks within the Potomac Yard Small Area Plan area, one at-large business representative with an interest in the project, and one at-large community representative with an interest in the project.

Commissioner Jakubek inquired about the Route 7 at I-395 VDOT Project, which implements pedestrian improvements. T&ES staff member Lisa Jaatenin stated she and two other T&ES staff members previously met at VDOT's request regarding pedestrian improvements for the project. The purpose of the project is to rehabilitate the Route 7 (King Street) Bridge over I-395. The bridge has six lanes of traffic with a raised median in the center. There is a pedestrian crossing at Menokin Drive that travels from the side to the middle. It becomes narrow and unsafe as it nears Park Center Drive. Staff and VDOT discussed keeping the median in the middle but widening or repositioning it to allow landscape and buffer areas on the sides. Additionally, staff and VDOT discussed the placement of jersey barriers or 54" high fencing for the section that evolves onto the bridge. Finally, staff and VDOT discussed placing a signal at one of the streets to facilitate crossings. VDOT informed staff that their consultant will look at complete streets alternatives and perhaps incorporate some of staff's suggestions. Construction on the project will not begin until 2018; therefore, VDOT will continue to hold community meetings on the project. Commissioner Jakubek asked about the possibility of placing a sidewalk on the side as opposed to the center. Ms. Jaatenin replied that VDOT will be using the project's maintenance funds for the pedestrian improvements but additional funding would be needed to place a sidewalk on the side. Commissioner Macek asked why VDOT chose to open the bridge in one direction during construction instead of a single lane in each direction. Ms. Jaatenin responded that currently the project is in the conceptual stages. She noted that the City will be working closely with VDOT and could potentially discuss choices about construction closures during the permitting process.

Councilman Lovain reported that the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) is very interested in a commuter ferry service. NVRC performed a market analysis that suggested a port on King Street had strong market potential. The City responded to the report, noting that it generally supports the concept of utilizing the Potomac River as a regional transportation corridor; however, the City's position is that Old Town Alexandria cannot absorb the commuter parking associated with the implementation of a port on King Street.

Commissioner Macek stated that the City and WMATA had negotiated site control during the previous King Street Metrorail Station development site plan approval process. Control of the Kiss-n-Ride and taxi stand area will be transferred to the City through a permanent easement to the City, while WMATA will retain site control over the bus bay portion of the site. Under the new agreement, WMATA will hold the land title to both sites. The City will now be able to incorporate its desired safety and design elements and maintain the property according to its own standards. Such improvements and the reconfiguration of the existing parking lot were unanimously approved by the Planning Commission

### **3. Commission Updates**

There were no updates offered by the Commissioners.

### **4. Other Business**

T&ES staff member Carrie Sanders reported that Sandra Marks has resigned from her position with the City. As a result, Ms. Sanders will serve in Ms. Mark's position as Acting Deputy Director of Transportation. Subsequently, T&ES staff member Steve Sindiong will serve in Ms. Sander's position as Acting Division Chief of the Transportation Planning Division.

T&ES Director Yon Lambert spoke about the Community Meeting on Pedestrian Safety held at Maury Elementary School on September 14, 2015. The meeting was held in response to the pedestrian fatality that occurred at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Braddock Road. Members of Council, City staff, and the Police were in attendance to answer questions and listen to community concerns regarding pedestrian safety in City neighborhoods. All comments will be tabulated and short term action items will be implemented in the vicinity of the accident.

## **5. HB 2 Grant Applications**

T&ES staff member Carrie Sanders gave an overview of House Bill Two (HB2). She stated the ultimate goal of HB2 is to ensure the best use of limited transportation funds. For FY 2017 through FY 2022, \$500 million is available for high priority projects statewide and \$100 million is available for the Northern Virginia District. The City must submit its HB2 application by September 30, 2015. In January 2016, a list of all submitted projects and their scores will be submitted to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The CTB will post the submitted projects online for public comment. In April 2016, the draft Six Year Plan will be released, followed by public hearings to gather input. The Board is expected to make its final decision on which projects to fund through HB2 by July 2016. Ms. Sanders revealed the list of projects staff proposes to submit for City Council approval. The projects are based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the HB2 process. Commissioner Anderson made a motion to endorse the prioritized list of transportation projects that staff will request for funding through the HB2 grant application process. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jakubek and unanimously approved.

## **6. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Balance Project Funding**

T&ES staff member Carrie Sanders reported that in developing the FY 2016 budget, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority's (WMATA) operating and capital programs placed substantial pressure on the City's transportation funding sources. As it is not possible for the City to project the exact amount of funding required for WMATA, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) contained a surplus balance of \$930,000 in the FY2016 budget. This balance will allow staff to fund smaller-scale projects and initiatives. Staff proposed the Commission recommend City Council to distribute the balance between three projects: 1) sidewalk capital maintenance, 2) the Holmes Run Greenway and 3) the King/Beauregard intersection project. Staff proposed a joint work session with City Council at their legislative meeting on October 27. Staff and the Commissioners will discuss the work session's logistics before October 27.

## **7. Proposed WMATA Bus Service Changes – Public Hearing**

WMATA Assistant Manager of Bus Service Planning Al Hines and Virginia Bus Service Planner Andre Stafford presented proposed State of Good Operation service changes. WMATA annually assesses its bus services to determine whether or not these services are meeting WMATA productivity standards. The first proposed change discussed was the elimination of route 9-A as a large portion of the route is duplicated by Metroway service. The 10-A route is proposed for modification at its tail end to provide an alternative between South

Old Town and Huntington Station, which 9-A currently serves. WMATA proposed to eliminate the 10-R and 10-S route from Pentagon to Rosslyn stating that productivity is low on this route. WMATA proposed to revise routes 21-A and 21-D express service from Southwest Alexandria to Pentagon in order for a local system to take over that route. There is also a proposal for miscellaneous changes to the late night service on the Beauregard Street routes 7A, 7H, 7X, and 7Y. The 28-X route is a peak hour only service from Tysons Corner to the Mark Center. WMATA proposed to start this route at the East Falls Church Metro Station and terminate at the Mark Center. WMATA proposed for the outbound services to operate every 15 minutes rather than every 30 minutes during the peak hour to compensate for the loss of the 10-A route. Route 29N is proposed to operate every 30 minutes rather than every 60 minutes on Saturday and Sunday. There is also a proposal to eliminate route 5A, which many Alexandria residents use although it is not an Alexandria route. This route provides express service from L'Enfant Plaza in the District of Columbia, Rosslyn, in Arlington County, and Dulles Airport.

The next steps in the process are to continue to have jurisdictional meetings throughout September and October 2015. The WMATA staff will share feedback with jurisdictions regarding proposed changes in October. The WMATA staff will prepare a docket for their Board's approval based on jurisdictional feedback and concurrence in November or December. WMATA will share the Board approved changes in Spring 2016 and implement modified services in Summer 2016.

A public hearing was opened. Amy Vander Vliet of 800 S. Washington Street spoke during the public hearing. Vander Vliet is in favor of keeping the 10-R. She has used the route 10 bus lines during rush hour to Rosslyn for the past 9 years. She recommended advertising to encourage and inform citizens about the bus lines from Alexandria to Rosslyn. She stated the 10-R is not reflected on the Rosslyn Station bus boards. Ms. Vander Vliet stated that if someone is at the Rosslyn Station, there is no indication that the route 10 bus line to Alexandria is an option. There being no other comments, the hearing was closed. Commissioner Jakubek made a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Klejst, to send a letter to WMATA endorsing the recommended bus service changes with the exception of changes to the 10-R. The Commission recommended retaining some services on the current 10-R route to serve existing users. The Commission also recommended improving outreach to riders to make them aware of bus lines parallel to the Metrorail blue line corridor. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

## **8. Old Town Area Parking Study - Public Hearing**

T&ES staff member Ray Hayhurst updated the Commission about the Old Town Area Parking Study. He indicated the 2015 OTAPS Work Group was reconvened to review updated data and develop recommendations related to metered parking and residential permit parking in the study area. He outlined the recommendations of the 2015 OTAPS Work Group and the next steps. The Work Group issued the following recommendations: 1) improve parking management in the study area; 2) encourage short-term visitors to park in metered areas rather than residential blocks; 3) encourage long-term visitors to use transit and park in off-street garages and surface lots; 4) preserve parking on residential blocks for residents and guests; 5) encourage compliance at meters and in residential parking districts. The Work Group's next steps are to prioritize its recommendations for a presentation before the Traffic and Parking Board and City Council. There being no public speakers, Commissioner Anderson made a motion to endorse the recommendations of the work group with the exception of its position on initiating the process for amending or changing residential permit parking, emphasizing the

need for better wayfinding for garages, the need for better parking enforcement, implementation of the Old Town DASH circulator, and the pay by phone residential parking pilot. The Transportation Commission disagrees with the OTAPS work group position not to change the process for amending or creating residential permit parking districts. The Commission believes that reforming the current process to change on-street parking regulations may expedite improvements in the study area and would allow for more consistent parking regulations block-to-block that would be less confusing to residents and visitors alike. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Michaelis and unanimously approved.

#### **9. Oakville Triangle / Route 1 Corridor Plan - Public Hearing**

T&ES staff member Steve Sindiong gave an update on the project and asked that the Commissioners review the corridor plan for consistency with the Transportation Master Plan, as well as endorse the corridor plan. Mr. Sindiong spoke about the transportation analysis and how the Plan's comprehensive transportation study examined the transportation impacts within the Plan area and beyond the Plan boundaries. Mr. Sindiong discussed the Plan's key transportation recommendations, including the pedestrian network, improvements in the bicycle network, transportation demand management strategies, and the different phases of the improvements. Mr. Sindiong detailed the key goals of the Transportation Master Plan and how the Corridor Plan responds to the Transportation Master Plan. Mr. Sindiong introduced Planning and Zoning staff member Carrie Beach. Ms. Beach stated that the planning area consists of exclusively commercial and industrial properties on the west side of Route 1, and provided an overview of the Advisory Group process and other elements of the civic engagement process. She indicated that there is also a corresponding planning process ongoing for the Mt. Jefferson Park being led by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA). She spoke about the balance of mixed uses of the plan, affordable housing, and the proximity of the plan to the future Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, the Metroway, and the strategic goal to have development near transit. A public hearing was opened, but here being no public comments, was closed. Commissioner Anderson made a motion to endorse the plan as it is consistent with the Transportation Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klejst and unanimously approved.

#### **10. NVTa Call for 70% Regional Projects – Public Hearing**

T&ES staff member Ramond Robinson gave an overview of House Bill 2313 that levies additional taxes and a fee in planning districts that meet population, motor vehicle registration and transit ridership criteria. As of July 1, 2013, only the Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads planning districts meet the criteria. The additional revenues generated in Northern Virginia through these new taxes and fees are deposited into a fund managed by Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa). Thirty percent of the funds are distributed directly to member localities for use on transportation projects. The remaining 70 percent of the funds will be distributed by NVTa and used for regional transportation projects. For the FY2017 requests, staff recommends Potomac Yard Metro receive \$66 million and the West End Transitway receive \$7 million. A public hearing was opened, but here being no public comments, was closed. Commissioner Jakubek made a motion to endorse staff recommendation on NVTa Call for 70% Regional Projects which was seconded by Commissioner Anderson, voted on and unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Michaelis to adjourn the meeting, and seconded by Commissioner Jakubek. There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.